

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method of producing an inert anode for metal oxide electrolytic reduction, comprising the steps of:

providing [a] an anode substrate comprised ~~consisting of a metal, a cermet, or a ceramic material, where said anode substrate has a surface;~~

forming a molten metal oxide compound comprising ferrite and at least one divalent metal selected from the group consisting of iron, nickel, manganese, magnesium, and cobalt; and

coating only the surface of said anode substrate with said molten metal oxide compound to form an inert anode.

2. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein only the surface of said anode substrate is oxidized, whereby it promotes adherence of said molten metal oxide compound.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 1 further comprising attaching an electrical connector to said anode substrate.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said substrate is a metal selected from the group consisting of iron, nickel, cobalt, chromium, copper, manganese, magnesium, or an alloy thereof.

5 (Cancelled)

6. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein said molten metal oxide compound comprising ferrite substrate is a nickel ferrite ~~ceramic material~~.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said substrate is bi-metallic.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 8 wherein said bi-metallic substrate is an iron base metal and nickel or nickel alloy.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 8 wherein said bi-metallic substrate is iron-nickel-chromium alloy and nickel.

11. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein said molten metal oxide compound is formed by melting oxides of iron and at least one other metal, or by oxidizing iron and at least one other metal to form a molten ferrite while in a molten form.
12. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein said step of coating said substrate is carried out by spray atomization, immersion of said substrate in a bath of said molten metal oxide compound comprising ferrite, or by pouring said molten metal oxide compound comprising ferrite onto said substrate.
13. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein ~~said substrate has a surface~~, said surface ~~has being provided with~~ raised or indented portions.
14. (Original) A method according to claim 13, wherein said surface is provided with knurls, dimples, or a waffle pattern.
15. (Cancelled)
16. (Original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising adding a dopant to the molten metal oxide compound.

17. (Original) A method according to claim 16, wherein the dopant is selected from the group consisting of zinc, cobalt, or lithium compounds.
18. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 17 wherein the dopant compounds are oxides.
19. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 17 wherein the dopant compounds are carbonates or sulfides.
20. (Original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising a post-coating heat treatment of the coated anode in an oxygen-containing atmosphere.
21. (Original) A method according to claim 20 wherein said post-coating heat treatment is an anneal of the coated anode.
22. (Original) A method according to claim 20 wherein said post-coating heat treatment is a phase composition adjustment comprising: soaking the anode at a temperature of from 1000°C to 1400°C for a sufficient time to oxidize any remaining metallic nickel and metallic iron.

23. (Original) A method according to claim 22 further comprising slow cooling the anode to a temperature of from 100 to 400°C lower than said soaking temperature.
24. (Original) A method according to claim 23 further comprising soaking said anode in an oxygen-containing gas for a second period of time at a temperature to which the anode has been slow cooled, for final phase composition adjustment and microstructure adjustment.
25. (Original) A method according to claim 23 further comprising hot isostatic pressing of the anode at a temperature of at least 1000°C and a pressure of at least 1360 bar for a period of from about 4 to about 8 hours.
26. (Original) A method according to claim 24 further comprising hot isostatic pressing of the anode at a temperature of at least 1000°C and a pressure of at least 1360 bar for a period of from about 4 to about 8 hours.

27. (Currently amended) A method for producing an inert anode for metal oxide electrolytic reduction, comprising the steps of:

providing [a] an anode substrate comprised ~~eonsisting~~ of a metal, ~~a cermet, or a ceramic~~ material, where said anode substrate has a surface;

feeding at least one compound selected from the group consisting of nickel oxides, iron oxides, nickel ferrite, iron sulfides, nickel sulfides, iron carbonates, nickel carbonates, or mixtures thereof, to a melting vessel;

melting the compounds and forming molten nickel ferrite;

discharging molten nickel ferrite from the melting vessel at a temperature sufficient to maintain the molten nickel ferrite in the molten state;

adding a dopant to the nickel ferrite to form a molten mixture; and

coating the surface of said anode substrate with said molten mixture to form an inert anode.

28. (Original) A method according to claim 27, wherein the dopant is selected from the group consisting of zinc, cobalt, or lithium compounds.

29. (Original) A method according to claim 28 wherein the dopant compounds are oxides.

30. (Original) A method according to claim 28 wherein the dopant compounds are carbonates or sulfides.

31. (Currently amended) A method for producing an inert anode for metal oxide electrolytic reduction, comprising the steps of:

providing [a] an anode substrate comprised ~~eonsisting~~ of a metal, ~~a cermet, or a ceramic~~ material, where said anode substrate has a surface;

feeding metallic iron and metallic nickel in solid form to an oxidizing reactor;
melting and oxidizing the iron and nickel and forming molten nickel ferrite;
discharging molten nickel ferrite from the oxidizing reactor at a temperature sufficient to maintain the molten nickel ferrite in the molten state;

adding a dopant to increase electrical conductivity to the nickel ferrite and to form a molten mixture; and

coating the surface of said anode substrate with said molten mixture to form an inert anode.

32. (Original) A method according to claim 31, wherein the dopant is selected from the group consisting of zinc, cobalt, or lithium compounds.

33. (Original) A method according to claim 32 wherein the dopant compounds are oxides, carbonates or sulfides.

34 - 44. (Cancelled)